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## Congressman Greg Walden's Oregon Congressional Connection

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### *Your Direct Link to the News and Events in the Nation's Capital*

Tuesday, January 15, 2002

Dear Fellow Oregonian:

With Congress out of session until January 23<sup>rd</sup>, I'm taking advantage of my time in Oregon to work around the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and meet with many of the people I represent. In this edition of the Oregon Congressional Connection, I've included information about some of the public events I've attended recently, including the Klamath Water Forum, which took place in Klamath Falls on Saturday, January 12. Over 2,000 folks turned up on Saturday morning on short notice to show their solidarity. I encourage you to read further to find out what went on at the forum. I also included highlights of a number of important bills we passed in the final days before Congress adjourned for the year. You can find additional information on my web site at [www.walden.house.gov](http://www.walden.house.gov).

If you have any questions or comments about this e-newsletter or anything else taking place in Congress and our nation's capital, please e-mail me at [greg.walden@mail.house.gov](mailto:greg.walden@mail.house.gov). My staff and I will get back to you as quickly as possible.

I hope you find this week's Oregon Congressional Connection informative. Thank you.

God Bless America.

Congressman Greg Walden

#### In This Week's Edition

- District "Wrap-up"
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- News from Capitol Hill
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- Second District trivia

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### **District “Wrap Up”**

#### **Klamath Falls – January 11, 2002**

3:00 to 3:50 PM – I attended a meeting of the Klamath Water Users and Upper Basin Irrigators to discuss the latest developments in the ongoing water crisis that has affected the Klamath Basin. We discussed efforts to bring long overdue relief to the beleaguered farmers and ranchers in the Klamath Basin. Senator Gordon Smith joined me in the meeting.

4:00 to 4:50 PM – I visited the Oregon Institute of Technology to join OIT President Martha Anne Dow and other OIT administrators in celebrating federal funding provided in this year’s Energy and Water Appropriations Act and Labor, Health & Human Services and Education Appropriations Act. OIT received a total of \$800,000 in federal appropriations, which will go to the school’s Oregon Renewable Energy Center and Oregon Technology Center. I requested this funding on behalf of OIT and worked closely with the House appropriators to include my requests in the appropriations bills. Senator Gordon Smith joined me in the meeting.

6:30 to 10:30 PM – I spoke at a dinner hosted by the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> year of the Chamber. The theme of the evening was “Standing Together for Our Community.” Senator Gordon Smith also joined me at the dinner. The Chamber hosted an outstanding function.

#### **Lakeview – January 12, 2002**

12:00 to 12:30 PM – I attended an event to celebrate federal funding for the Lakeview-Alturas rail line, which received \$1.75 million in federal funding in this year’s Transportation Appropriations Act. I requested funding for this important project.

12:30 to 1:30 PM: I lunched with local leaders of Lakeview and Lake County.

1:30 to 2:15 PM – I toured the Bureau of Land Management/Interagency Fire Center and discussed interagency fire efforts and the implementation of the National Fire Plan with BLM and Forest Service personnel.

2:30 to 3:30 PM – I toured the Fremont Sawmill, which recently completed renovations to the mill.

4:00 to 7:30 PM – I visited the Warner Canyon Ski Area to take part in a dedication of new facilities for skiers, including a new triple chair lift and ski patrol room. This \$550,000 project was made possible with investments by the State of Oregon, the Collins-McDonald Trust Fund, the Lakeview Rotary Club, the Soroptimist International of Lakeview, and additional local businesses and individuals.

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## **“On the Horizon”**

### **January 14, 2002**

#### **Boardman**

10:00 to 10:45 AM – Today I met with officials at the Boardman Park and Recreation District to discuss land transfer issues.

#### **Hermiston**

11:45 AM to 1:15 PM – Today I was also the keynote speaker at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Oregon Water Coalition to deliver an update about the water crisis in the Klamath Basin and other water-related issues.

### **January 17, 2002**

#### **Hood River**

12:00 to 1:30 PM: I’ll be speaking at a lunch meeting of the Hood River Rotary to deliver an update on recent developments in Congress.

6:30 to 9:00 PM: I’m speaking at the annual Chamber Installation Banquet of the Hood River Chamber of Commerce.

### **January 21, 2002**

The times have not yet been established for the events I’m attending in central Oregon on Monday, January 21, but these are the stops I’m making during my visit. Other events may be added to my schedule as the date approaches.

#### **Madras**

I’m meeting with members of the Warm Springs Tribes to celebrate the signing into law of a bill I introduced in Congress (H.R. 483) to provide federal approval of the use of Warm Springs Tribal trust land and resources for the Tribe’s purchase of an interest in the Pelton Hydroelectric Project. I worked closely with the Tribes, local community leaders, and PGE, the prior owner, in this effort.

#### **Redmond**

I’m attending a lunch meeting with officials of the Redmond Airport and the City of Redmond at Redmond Airport. \$1.4 million was provided in this year’s Transportation Appropriations Act to fund design and construction costs associated with the expansion of the Roberts Field terminal in Redmond. I requested funding for this project.

#### **Bend**

I’m attending the annual gala of the Bend / Central Oregon tourism industry.

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## **Klamath Update**

On Saturday, January 12, I addressed approximately 3,000 people at the Klamath Water Forum, which was held at the Fairgrounds in Klamath Falls. Among the crowd were farmers and ranchers of the Basin, their families, local residents of Klamath Falls, and supporters from across the West who had come to show their support for the people of the Klamath Basin. The high turnout and the energy that was evident among the attendees of the water forum was a testament to the hardship the community has suffered as a result of the government's decision to shut off irrigation water to the Basin in April of last year.

The most important update I wanted to deliver to the farmers in the Basin was my recent discussion with President George W. Bush about the water crisis they're facing. On Saturday, January 5, 2002, I had the opportunity to accompany the President on Air Force One, along with Senator Gordon Smith, during the President's flight from California to Portland. Our conversation with the President lasted the bulk of the two-hour flight, and the majority of our time was devoted to discussing the Klamath Basin. I was impressed by President Bush's familiarity with the details of the water crisis, as well as his genuine desire to help the Klamath farmers.

During his remarks at Parkrose High School in Portland, President Bush made reference to the water crisis in the Klamath Basin and assured the crowd that the issue was near and dear to his heart. I was extremely encouraged by the President's interest in this critical issue, and I look forward to the White House's support in our efforts to develop a workable solution in the very near future to the crisis. Since the Portland event, I have been in communication with senior White House aides, and I am confident that the President will be a strong ally in the coming months as we work to bring relief to the Basin and provide a long-term resolution to the water crisis.

I also spoke to the farmers and ranchers of the Basin about my efforts in Congress last year to address the problems facing agriculture in Klamath Falls, including a bill I introduced to return operations and maintenance fees to the irrigation districts that received no water last year, the Klamath Basin Emergency Operation and Maintenance Refund Act of 2001 (H.R. 2828). Common sense seems to dictate that you shouldn't have to pay for something you don't receive, and my colleagues in the House seemed to agree with this logic – my bill passed unanimously. The bill is expected to return over \$4 million to the irrigators of the Klamath Basin. I also updated the crowd about my efforts to pass a bill to study fish passage issues at Chiloquin Dam, which blocks the passage of up to 80% of endangered sucker fish and Coho salmon in the Sprague River. This bill, the Chiloquin Dam Fish Passage Feasibility Study Act of 2001 (H.R. 2585), also passed the House unanimously. Both my operations and maintenance bill and Chiloquin Dam bill await action by the Senate before they can be sent to the President for his signature. I also highlighted a bill I introduced to reform the government's application of the Endangered Species Act by incorporating more scientific study into decisions relating to species listing. This bill, the Sound Science for Endangered Species Act Planning Act of 2001 (H.R. 2829), is still awaiting action in the U.S. House.

I also commended farmers and ranchers in the Klamath Basin, as well as their supporters in the community, for their peaceful response to the extreme hardships of the past 9 months. I encouraged them to remain loud and focused and to continue to shun violent reactions to the crisis in the Basin.

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### **News from Capitol Hill**

In the final days before Congress adjourned for the year in December of 2001, we passed a number of important pieces of legislation. Most significantly were the National Defense Authorization Act, which outlines the funding priorities for the U.S. military, and the No Child Left Behind Act, the education reform bill of President Bush. We also passed the Railroad Retirement Act to improve the retirement system for America's retired railroad workers. Below are highlights of these important bills.

#### **Increasing Our Nation's Security**

On December 13, 2001, Congress passed the final version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (S. 1438). I was proud to vote in favor of this bill, which passed by a vote of 382 to 40 in the House and 96 to 2 in the Senate. The legislation was signed by the President on December 28.

This legislation was drafted with two key priorities in mind: increasing America's homeland security and providing our armed forces with the tools they need to accomplish their difficult mission. This bill authorizes significant increases in our research and development and combat readiness accounts, as well as providing the biggest pay raise in decades and other increased benefits for our men and women in uniform. America's security is only as good as the quality of the arms we provide our military and, most importantly, the way we treat the brave men and women who put their lives at risk in our defense. This bill represents our commitment to maintaining a strong, capable military and honoring those who make up its ranks.

The Fiscal Year 2002 Defense Authorization Act authorizes \$343.3 billion in defense spending. Key provisions of the bill follow.

#### **Combating Terrorism**

The President's budget request included \$5.6 billion for efforts to combat terrorism. Congress supported this request, as well as budget requests for Department of Energy (DOE) efforts to combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In addition, we added \$296 million for procurement and research and development programs to upgrade intelligence and situational awareness, enhance force protection, improve force command and control, and accelerate development and procurement of critical weapon systems.

#### **Defending Against Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)**

- **Chemical-Biological Detection, Protection, and Decontamination.** The bill authorizes \$523.2 million for research and development of programs to provide advanced individual protection and equipment to detect and decontaminate chemical-biological

agents. In addition, the bill authorizes \$366 million to procure chemical-biological protection and decontamination equipment and \$16.2 million for additional chemical-biological defense research and development.

- **Countermeasures Against Biological Warfare Agents.** The bill directs the Secretary of Defense to accelerate the program for development and production of medical countermeasures to defend against the most significant biological warfare agents, and authorized \$10 million in the chemical-biological defense program for this purpose. The bill also directs a study by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council on accelerating the approval and licensing of new vaccines and other medical countermeasures. Finally, the bill directs the Pentagon to develop a long-range plan for the production and acquisition of vaccines.

### **National Missile Defense**

The bill provides up to \$8.3 billion, \$3 billion more than the FY 2001 level, for the continued development of ballistic missile defenses. In addition, the conferees provided flexibility for the President to use up to \$1.3 billion of these funds for programs to combat terrorism.

### **Training and Equipment**

- **Assistance for Firefighters.** Firefighters are often the first emergency personnel to respond to a terrorist or WMD attack. To that end, the bill increases the existing firefighter grant program from \$300 million to \$900 million per year through 2004, and expanded the grants to include equipment and training to help firefighters respond to a terrorist or WMD attack.

### **Quality of Life**

- **Pay Raise:** Raises the pay of every service member by between five and 10 percent (effective January 1, 2002).
- **Housing Costs:** Reduces out-of-pocket housing costs for military personnel to 11.3 percent.
- **Health Care:** Fully funds the defense health program and improves the health care benefit.
- **Military Construction:** Provide \$10.5 billion (\$2 billion more than the fiscal year 2001 level) for military construction and family housing accounts.
- **Concurrent Receipt and Severe Disability Compensation:** Under current law, the retirement pay of military retirees with service-connected disabilities is reduced to offset disability compensation paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The bill authorizes military retirees to receive VA disability compensation without a reduction in retirement pay, effective after the President submits legislation in an annual budget request and Congress enacts legislation to expressly offset the costs of this initiative. In addition, the conferees enhanced the special compensation program for severely disabled retirees by expanding eligibility to retirees who are 60 percent disabled (effective February 1, 2002); increasing payments to retirees who are 80 percent to 100 percent disabled (effective January 1, 2003); and further increasing payments to retirees who are 70 percent to 100 percent disabled (effective October 1, 2004).

### **Military Readiness**

- Critical Readiness Accounts: Increases key readiness accounts above FY 2001 levels by nearly \$10 billion.

### **Modernization**

- Procurement Accounts: Authorizes nearly \$62 billion for procurement of weapons, equipment and ammunition.
- Research and Development Accounts: Provides \$47.8 billion (\$6.8 billion more than the Fiscal Year 2001 spending level) for research and development efforts.

### **Education Reform**

On December 13, 2001, the U.S. House passed the final version of the President's education reform package, entitled the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (H.R. 1), which passed by a vote of 381 to 41. The Senate passed the bill by a margin of 87 to 10, and the President signed the bill into law on January 8, 2002.

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act is a significant step forward in American education policy. This bill provides concrete measures to address the problems facing America's schools with an emphasis on accountability, increased flexibility for states and local school districts, greater local control, more options for parents, and more funding for what works.

Key provisions of the bill follow.

#### **Enhancing Accountability & Demanding Results**

- Empowers parents by providing annual report cards on school performance and statewide results, as well as information about the quality of their children's schools, the qualifications of the teachers instructing their children, and their children's progress in key subjects.
- Requires states using federal education dollars to demonstrate results through annual reading and math assessments for students in grades 3 through 8. Authorizes \$400 million to help states design and administer tests.

#### **Unprecedented State & Local Flexibility**

- Provides unprecedented new flexibility for all 50 states and every local school district in America in the use of federal education funds.
- Gives every school district in America the immediate freedom to transfer up to 50 percent of the federal dollars they receive among an assortment of programs.
- Allows up to 150 local flexibility demonstration projects to be established across the nation.

#### **Rural Schools**

- Provides greater fairness for rural school districts by giving local school officials greater say in how federal funds are used.

- Authorizes \$300 million for two initiatives to address the unique problems associated with the education of students in rural school districts:
- 1) Allows eligible local school districts to combine funding under various formula grant programs to support local or statewide education reform efforts. Minimum grants for local school districts would not be less than \$20,000. Eligible school districts could use funds for virtually any activity authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including educational technology, professional development, technical assistance, and teacher recruitment and retention.
- 2) Authorizes grants to rural schools in which 20 percent of students live at or below the poverty level. The program is flexible and funds can be used for teacher recruitment, salaries and retention, teacher training, educational technology and for academic enrichment programs.

### **Streamlining Bureaucracy & Reducing Red Tape**

- Consolidates and streamlines programs and targets resources to existing programs that serve poor students.
- Reduces the overall number of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs from 55 to 45.

### **Expanding Choices For Parents**

- Lays the groundwork for private school choice with breakthroughs on several key elements that enhance options for parents with children in chronically failing schools. Options would be made available immediately (for the 2002-03 school year) for students in thousands of schools already identified as failing under current law.
- Public/Charter School Choice: Allows parents with children in failing schools to transfer their child to a better-performing public or charter school immediately after a school is identified as failing.
- Supplemental Services: Allows federal Title I funds (approximately \$500 to \$1,000 per child) to be used to provide supplemental educational services – including tutoring, after school services, and summer school programs – for children in failing schools. Faith-based providers would be among those eligible to be selected by parents to assist students.

### **Prohibiting National Testing**

- Prohibits federally sponsored national testing, federally controlled curriculum, as well as any mandatory national teacher test or certification.

### **The President's Reading First Initiative**

- Triples federal reading funding from the present \$300 million to \$900 million in 2002.

### **Promoting Teacher Quality and Smaller Classrooms**

- Explicitly bans federal teacher testing and national teacher certification.



- Gives local schools new freedom to make spending decisions with up to 50 percent of the non-Title I federal funds they receive. With this new freedom, a local school district could decide to use additional funds for hiring new teachers, increasing teacher pay, improving teacher training and development or other uses.
- Consolidates current programs into a new Teacher Quality Program that would allow greater flexibility for local school districts.
- Includes Teacher Opportunity Payments, which would provide funds for teachers to choose professional development activities.

### **Dollars To The Classroom**

- Applies “Dollars to the Classroom” principles to federal formula grant programs, meaning that 95 percent of funds would be spent at the local level.

### **Making Schools Safer**

- Allows students who are the victims of crime or attend a public school designated by the state as unsafe to transfer to a safe public school.
- Helps ensure that teachers, principals, and other school professionals can undertake reasonable actions to maintain order and discipline in the classroom without the fear of being dragged into court or subjected to frivolous lawsuits.

### **Promoting English Fluency**

- Consolidates the Bilingual and Immigrant Education Programs, streamlining the current bureaucracy into a single federal program with a new focus: helping limited English proficient (LEP) students learn English.
- Would require that LEP children be tested for reading and language arts in English after they have attended school in the United States for three consecutive years.
- Requires that parents be notified that their LEP child is in need of English language instruction.
- Eliminates the current requirement that 75 percent of funding be used to support programs using a child’s native language in instruction.

### **Protecting Home Schools**

Exempts all home schools and home school students (as well as private schools and students not using federal funds) from testing requirements.

### **Railroad Retirement**

On December 11, 2001, the U.S. House passed the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 (HR 10) by a margin of 369-35. I was pleased to vote for this bill. The bill had previously been passed by the Senate by a vote of 90 to 9. The President signed the bill into law on December 21, 2001.

HR 10 improves upon the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 by reforming and expanding the current benefit structure, especially for widows and widowers, who will receive 100% of tier II benefits rather than the current 50%. In addition, the legislation modernizes the system’s investment practices and strengthens the financing of the program. I’m glad

that we were finally able to pass these much needed reforms to the Railroad Retirement Act. Many hard-working Oregonians will benefit from this important measure.

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### **Online Survey on [www.walden.house.gov](http://www.walden.house.gov)**

In order to keep abreast of the issues that matter most to Oregonians, I've added a new online survey to my web site at [www.walden.house.gov](http://www.walden.house.gov). If you have not already done so, I hope you'll take a moment to register your positions. And please tell your friends, family and coworkers about the new survey and encourage them to fill it out.

My survey asks Oregonians their opinions on a variety of local and national issues, including the war on terrorism, education reform, efforts to stimulate the economy, and the federal government's natural resource policies. Keeping informed about the positions of the people I represent in Congress is critical to my being able to serve them effectively.

My web site also contains a year-end congressional report to taxpayers in Oregon ([http://walden.house.gov/Year\\_end\\_report\\_.pdf](http://walden.house.gov/Year_end_report_.pdf)), regular updates on the Klamath Basin crisis, and other developments in Congress.

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### **Sending mail to Capitol Hill**

Regular U.S. mail delivery to my congressional office in Washington, D.C. continues to be slow and unreliable. While I was advised that mail delivery would resume in late November of 2001, the process of irradiating incoming mail to protect against bio-terrorism continues to cause lengthy delays. As a result, I have not been able to respond to a number of Oregonians who have contacted me via regular mail since early October.

Until an efficient reliable means of delivering regular mail to congressional offices is established, I encourage you to communicate with me in Washington, D.C., by fax at (202) 225-5774 and by email at [greg.walden@mail.house.gov](mailto:greg.walden@mail.house.gov). You can also send U.S. mail to my district offices in Medford and Bend at the addresses below. My district staff keeps me closely apprised of the mail I receive when I'm not in Oregon.

Medford District Office  
843 East Main Street  
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### **Second District Trivia**

This week's question: What is the sister city of Medford, Oregon?

For the answer to this question and to take a crack at past questions, click here:

<http://www.walden.house.gov/trivia/trivia.htm>

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For more information on these and other issues, please visit my website at [www.walden.house.gov](http://www.walden.house.gov) or call my Washington, D.C., office at (202) 225-6730. You can also call my Medford office toll-free at (800) 533-3033. If you have any questions or comments, please send them to [dallas.boyd@mail.house.gov](mailto:dallas.boyd@mail.house.gov). If you'd like to be removed from the "Oregon Congressional Connection" list simply send an email to [newsletter-request@or02list.house.gov](mailto:newsletter-request@or02list.house.gov) and type UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.